Michigan.gov Web Site Design Standards

v1.0 April 2002 Last Updated: April 2, 2002 - See Change Record Log Page 31

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NOTE TO ALL PROJECT MANAGERS AND DEVELOPERS:
The content of this style guide is the copyright protected information of the State of Michigan. Use of the style guide is intended for the purposes of communicating to source code designers, developers and project managers the appearance system and information architecture requirements in place on the Michigan.gov portal web and compatibility with current State of Michigan agency web sites migrated to the Michigan.gov technology platform (www.michigan.gov).

Those bidding on state project and e-initiatives should use this style guide as a reference manual in building and constructing their specific web based applications and setting design requirements.

Naturally, no style guide can take into account every possible aspect of any given design. Therefore it is the responsibility of any development or project manager to contact the e-Michigan Office and Webmaster to receive the latest upgrades and specifications regarding all information contained within this document prior to designing, constructing or delivering any web based or on-line services solution for the State of Michigan.

All aspects of the banner header graphic (lighthouse image) are under the express control of the e-Michigan Office. **Developers should not attempt to imitate or recreate the Michigan.gov brand or graphics elements represented within this document.**

Requests for any Michigan.gov brand element should be made to the e-Michigan Office Center of Excellence: attention Webmaster.

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Design Standards using the Michigan.gov Brand

Introduction

The Michigan.gov logo and banner design standards are based on current the Michigan.gov branding established with the portal web site at www.michigan.gov. During the process of moving all state agency sites to the Vignette Content Management Platform, additional branding was needed to support applications that remained on state servers as well as non-vignette applications being built by outside vendors. This document encompasses those standards into tangible and intangible elements, such as consistent tone and visual brand, that define the Michigan.gov state brand identity.

The purpose of this document is to communicate these design standards, conventions and idioms to be used in the creation and maintenance of the Michigan.gov Agency Migration web sites and apply the information architecture adopted by Michigan.gov.

These standards apply to look and feel (e.g., fonts, colors, graphic buttons, icons and photography), navigation blueprint, location and position of required elements including policies, copyrights and other key elemnts of the Michigan.gov brand.

Visual Style Requirements – Standard Page Elements

There are a number of page elements that comprise the Michigan.gov brand. Some elements are standard and required across all page displays, while others remain optional – to be applied through the design requirements process depending on the application's navigation.

There are several basic assumptions that comprise the standard information architecture of any application design layout. They include:

1. 800 x 600 pixel optimized screen resolution (256 color minimum)
2. 450 pixel above the fold priority for primary content display
3. 740 pixel maximum width build display
4. Display correctly in both IE (Internet Explorer) 4.X and NS (NetScape) 4.X

Required Page Elements

These elements appear on all pages, except where otherwise specified: they include:

1. Michigan.gov co-branded Agency or Cross agency banner header region
2. Sub Header Top navigation with embedded links and optional search features
3. Application Body Area and for main content
4. Footer with policy and special features links

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Banner Header - 740x100 pixels

The banner header area contains the static image of the agency or cross agency logo, the agency, division or commission name, and the Michigan.gov brand element featuring the state coat-of-arms and Michigan lighthouse lakeshore image. See page 19-28 for a complete review.

This image solution comprises the bulk of the Michigan.gov brand elements and has been implemented across all agencies. This standard applies to all web display pages for both Internet, Intranet, Extranet or any other web delivery or on-line service in place or planned for the State of Michigan. It also is intended for any Commercial Off-the-Shelf (COTS) web applications purchased from vendors (Seibel, Lawson etc.). In cases where there is little or constrained ability to customize applications to accommodate the look and feel requirements outlined in this document, please contact the e-Michigan Office/webmaster for a more detailed analysis and solution.

Special Notes regarding Banner Header Hyper-linking

For all versions of the banner header, the region identified to the far left (containing the agency or cross agency logo and agency name) **will hyper-link** to the parent agency web site (www.michigan.gov/agencyname). This area is specifically designated with the following dimensions: **475x100 pixels**.

The remaining area to the far right **will hyper-link** to the Michigan.gov portal home page (www.michigan.gov). This area is specifically designated with the following dimensions: **265x100 pixels**.

475x100 **265x100**

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Reduced Banner Header sizes

In most cases, the full agency banner header (100 pixels) is to be used to match the parent agency banner design. In some cases, especially where the application display area is critical to information included in the application, two smaller versions of the same banner header may be used.

These consist of equally sized and proportioned banners that follow tighter (X) height dimensions. They include:

- 740x70 pixels
- 740x50 pixels

Critical to these banners however is the exact orientation of the design elements as they relate to agency or generic logo, application or agency name, placement and alignment of all Michigan.gov branding elements.

Reduced Banner Examples:

100 pix

70 pix

50 pix

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Application Body Area – 720 pixels

This area of the site is dedicated to the display of all information and content affecting the user interface of the application itself. Generally speaking, this area is designed to accommodate nearly any required content entry field, login fields, special application directives etc. Essentially, this is where the actual application resides and there are few restrictions regarding look and feel except for the 10 pixel gutter restrictions surrounding the application body area. The application screen is allowed to expand vertically (scroll) to accommodate the application content needs. See detailed dimensional layouts starting on page 14.

Customer Focus

It is recommended that designs (especially primary and introductory home pages) attempt to include important information about the application itself, special features of the application and describe the intended audience, especially above the fold line (450 pixels).

Other ways to serve the user include providing areas for "What's New" or other pertinent information that would be difficult to locate without having to navigate to a specific page or section.

Use of link names and text descriptions of certain information or functionality that uses clear, direct language rather than "official" program names and acronyms that average users may not be aware of. Best practices naming and links use:

AVOID:

Access form DMB-96

PREFERRED:

Access the NOTICE OF FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE form -or-

NOTICE OF FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE form

Font classifications and styles

All pages (and code) should make use of relative font sizes to accommodate ADA compliance and best practices for user-set browser settings. Font styles should default to Arial, Helvetica Bold, Regular and Italic, sans serif in sizes ranging from the smallest (-2) to the largest (+2). See page 7 for details.

Font styles such as but not limited to: comic sans, *calligraphy*, *scripts*, *brushes*, **BLOCK**, or **over-styled** typefaces should be avoided and are not business appropriate for state of Michigan on-line services.

Font tags, style and color

Font tags embedded within the code or other programming languages may treat font tags differently, but at the HTML display level the text should follow the general specifications listed on page 7. Font colors may adopt the look and feel of a particular site, but attention should be given to provide optimum contrast on a background cell color. Body text default colors, unless otherwise specified within the application style or server side includes, should be black (#000000) text on a white background.

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Use of relative font sizes in HTML

Resulting display font tags are demonstrated below. Depending on the font color associated with either an existing color style based on the parent agency site or a new style for a cross agency site, font tags should be constructed as follows to allow for compliance and browser settings:

Engler:"Fast Lane to Future is Now Open"
<font face='arial, helvetica, sans-serif' color='#003366' size='-2'>

Engler:"Fast Lane to Future is Now Open"
<font face='arial, helvetica, sans-serif' color='003366' size='-1'>

Engler:"Fast Lane to Future is Now Open"
<font face='arial, helvetica, sans-serif' color='003366' size='-1'>Engler:"Fast Lane to Future is Now Open"

Engler:"Fast Lane to Future is Now Open"
<font style="font-weight: bold" face='arial, helvetica, sans-serif' color='# 003366' size='+1' style='font-weight:bold'>

Engler:"Fast Lane to Future is Now Open"
<font face='arial, helvetica, sans-serif' color='#003366' size='+1' style='font-weight:bold'>

Engler:"Fast Lane to Future is Now Open"
<font face='arial, helvetica, sans-serif' color='#003366' size='+2' style='font-weight:bold'>

Below are examples of font size selections as seen in both IE and NS browser platforms that take advantage of relative font sizes in the HTML.

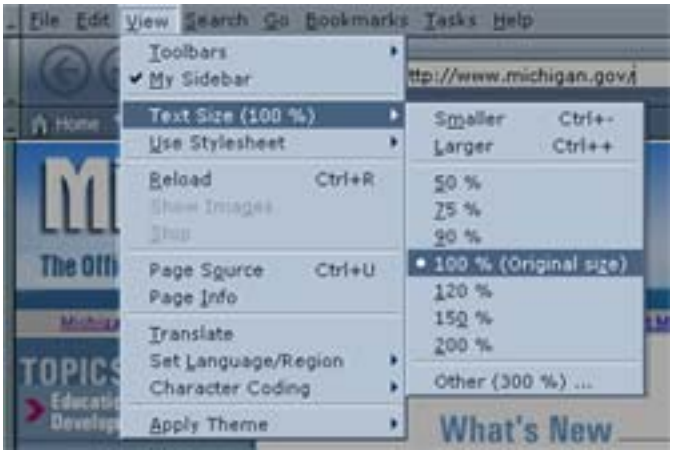

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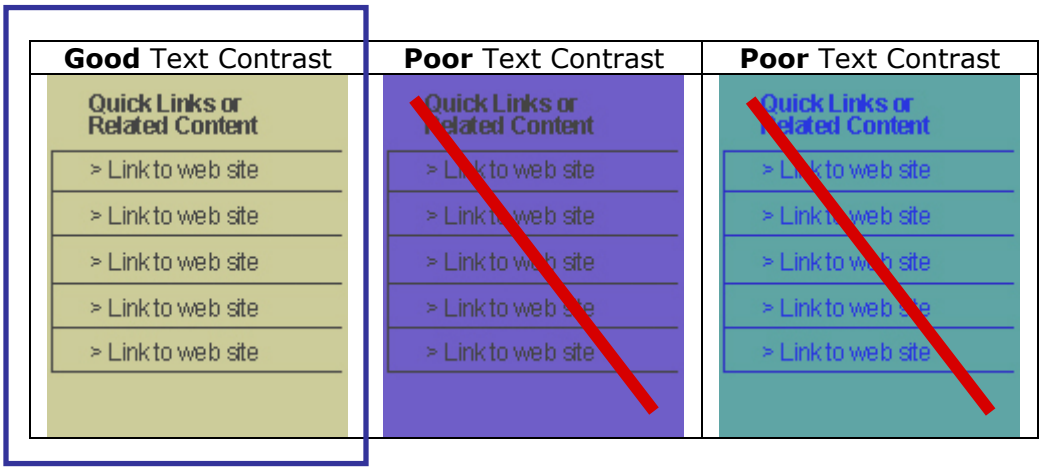
Table Cell Color Contrast

Contrast for all text should default to black text on a white background. In the case of applications being built for specific agencies, look and feel arrangements for table cell colors should match those already live and in place through the parent site hosted on Michigan.gov (for example: an application being built for the Department of Treasury should follow the exact look and feel requirements already in use at that site – see www.michigan.gov/treasury).

For the remaining body area, color selections and text colors can be manipulated for a unique look and feel consistent for that particular site. Cross agency applications that use their own text colors should strive to design cell colors that offer the highest contrast well with text. Avoid the use of color combinations that make it difficult to distinguish text from the cell color at-a-glance. Watch for colored text on backgrounds that have near to or the same value as the cell color.



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Application Names

The body area is also the recommended area in which specific agency or applications names and acronyms as well as specific logos or other graphics and look and feel elements can be included. See the example below for the treatment of the application from Corrections.

Body Area Gutter

The Body Area should also contain built in accommodations of ten (10) pixels for all margins as they approach either side of the width (not to exceed 720 pixels) and up to the sub-header. Depending on whether left or right navigation is also used, these gutter restrictions remain in effect. See examples starting on page 14

Above-the-Fold line

The body area also carries with it some best practices regarding content display: it is recommended that the content appear above-the-fold as much as possible. Application introductory screens contain much of the critical information needed by users to properly navigate the site. An effort should be made here to not exceed the 450-pixel limitation. This includes the left navigation areas (when used) as well as the body content.

http://www.state.mi.us/mdoc/asp/otis2.html

Figure above includes many of the look and feel requirements found in this document.

Use of Images, Image Size and Scaling

The following is information is quoted from Jakob Nielsen, recognized Usability Interface pioneer. Jakob Nielsen, Ph.D., is a User Advocate and principal of the Nielsen Norman Group (www.nngroup.com). He holds 63 United States patents, mainly on ways of making the Internet easier to use.

"…The amount of graphics on web pages should be minimized because of the long download times they require. Even so, users do want to see photos of the products [or services] they are buying because they can't otherwise touch and feel them.

There are also cases where the old saying *'An image is worth a thousand words'* is so fitting that it overcomes the corollary '*An image takes two thousand words of download time*.'"

"The traditional way to produce small versions of images is to create thumbnails in a graphics program by using the resize command. Unfortunately, scaling reduces the image so much that pictures with extensive detail wash out and become too crowded to be meaningful. Cropping preserves those details that are within the new view port, but at the cost of loosing the context of the image as a whole."

"…use a combination of cropping and scaling, resulting in a technique I call *relevance-enhanced image reduction*. For example, to get a thumbnail that is 10% of the original image, first crop the image to 32% of the original size then scale the result to 32%. The final image will be 0.32 x 0.32 = 0.1 of the original."[1]

Below is an example of relevance-enhanced image reduction:

<table>
<tr><td>Original Image
 </td><td>Crop to 32% of original size – view port is centered
 </td></tr>
<tr><td>Image cropped
 </td><td>Scale image 32% - view port is centered
 </td></tr>
</table>

[1] Jakob Nielsen, Designing Web Usability: The Practice of Simplicity, 1999 New Riders Publishing, pg: 134-135

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Sub Header Top Navigation – 740x25 pixels

In ALL cases, a gray, sub header top navigation area supports the banner header. This area follows the same width dimensions as the banner header and is always 25 pixels high. The sub header also includes embedded links, several are required, as well as an area which can be customized depending on the application navigational needs. These include:

REQUIRED

- Michigan.gov home link (far left)
- Application Home Link (<ApplicationName> Home)
- Contact Agency Link (Contact <Agency/ApplicationName>)

OPTIONAL

- Site Map
- FAQ
- Search
- Login
- Other utility links as needed to support the application

All embedded links are underlined server side text:

- Background color: Gray #CCCCCC
- Embedded HTML Links: Arial, font-size –2, Font color # 000000
- "GO" oval button graphic size 22x28, Arial Italic Bold, #000000

NOTE: Image has been sliced to fit page size – full Sub-Header dimensions are 740x25 pixels

Footer Links

The remaining page element that appears at the bottom of all pages is the footer links area. This area appears directly under the main body area of the application and is centered and appears in three (3) lines of text. The overall dimension of this area depends on the number of links that appear in the Sub Header area. In all cases, all Footer links should restate the Sub Header text links.

The Michigan.gov Home, State Web Sites and all Policy links should always point to the originating Michigan.gov URL to maintain absolute version control of official State of Michigan on-line services. These policies (source code) should never be copied, altered to placed directly into the originating application.

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Additionally, there are other links that are supported but the Michigan.gov portal site and are to be included in this array. They include:

REQUIRED – Line One (1)

Link Name	Link URL
Michigan.gov Home	http://www.michigan.gov/
Parent Agency or Application Home	http://*
All Other Optional Utility links such as FAQ, Site Map etc.	http://*
Contact (<Agency/ApplicationName>)	http://*
State Web Sites	http://www.michigan.gov/emi/1,1303,7-102----A,00.html

REQUIRED – Line Two (2)

Link Name	Link URL
Privacy Policy	http://www.michigan.gov/emi/1,1303,7-102----PP,00.html
Link Policy	http://www.michigan.gov/emi/1,1303,7-102----LP,00.html
Accessibility Policy	http://www.michigan.gov/emi/1,1303,7-102----AP,00.html
Security Policy	http://www.michigan.gov/emi/1,1303,7-102----SP,00.html

REQUIRED – Line Three (3) – text only

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Footer Example:

Michigan.gov Home | Application Home | Site Map | Contact Application | State Web Sites
Accessibility Policy | Privacy Policy | Link Policy | Security Policy
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Policy Links and Issues

Applications are required to utilize links in the footer that point to existing URL's hosted by Michigan.gov. By doing so however, the application or on-line service carries with it the implication of conformity to the stated policies. By linking to these policies you are subject to compliance. Applications that deviate from these standards should either be modified to correct the discrepancies or submit reasons to the e-Michigan Office why any deviation should be allowed.

It is critical that agencies, when designing their applications, consider the implications of the policies they are linking to, specifically:

- Security (use of persistent cookies)
- Accessibility (use of text equivalents, drop down menus, java scripts and pop-up windows)
- Privacy (disclosure of personally identifiable information)
- Linking (suitability of information linked to from your site).

In some cases, two-factor authentication (username and password) within most applications require basic Secure Socket Layer (SSL) encryptions for user input.

Use of higher security requirements on the part of the application (to submit personally identifiable information such as Social Security Numbers, Date of Birth, Drivers License Numbers, Federal ID Numbers etc.) must be considered a deviation form the stated policy. Such applications are therefore required to provide a more detailed review and posting of the policy information within the web site itself.

Applications must accommodate the user by providing access to additional, detailed information about how user information is handled internally and how this information is stored and protected from access or sale to third parties – the same is true for ADA compliance and all other policy areas.

This area cannot be overlooked as application requirements are defined and sites are built.

Policy questions and more detailed information can be obtained by contacting the e-Michigan Office at (517) 241-5780. Ask for the Policy and Communications Division.

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Michigan.gov Information Architecture

Figure 1 – Basic Page Construction
Below is a detailed layout of the information architecture requirements for applications designed without the need of supporting navigation from the left or right of the Application Body Area.

The Application Body Area in this figure is designed to accommodate almost any application need, maximizing the useable area directly under the banner and sub-header.

Standard ten (10) pixel gutters also apply to the Body Area.

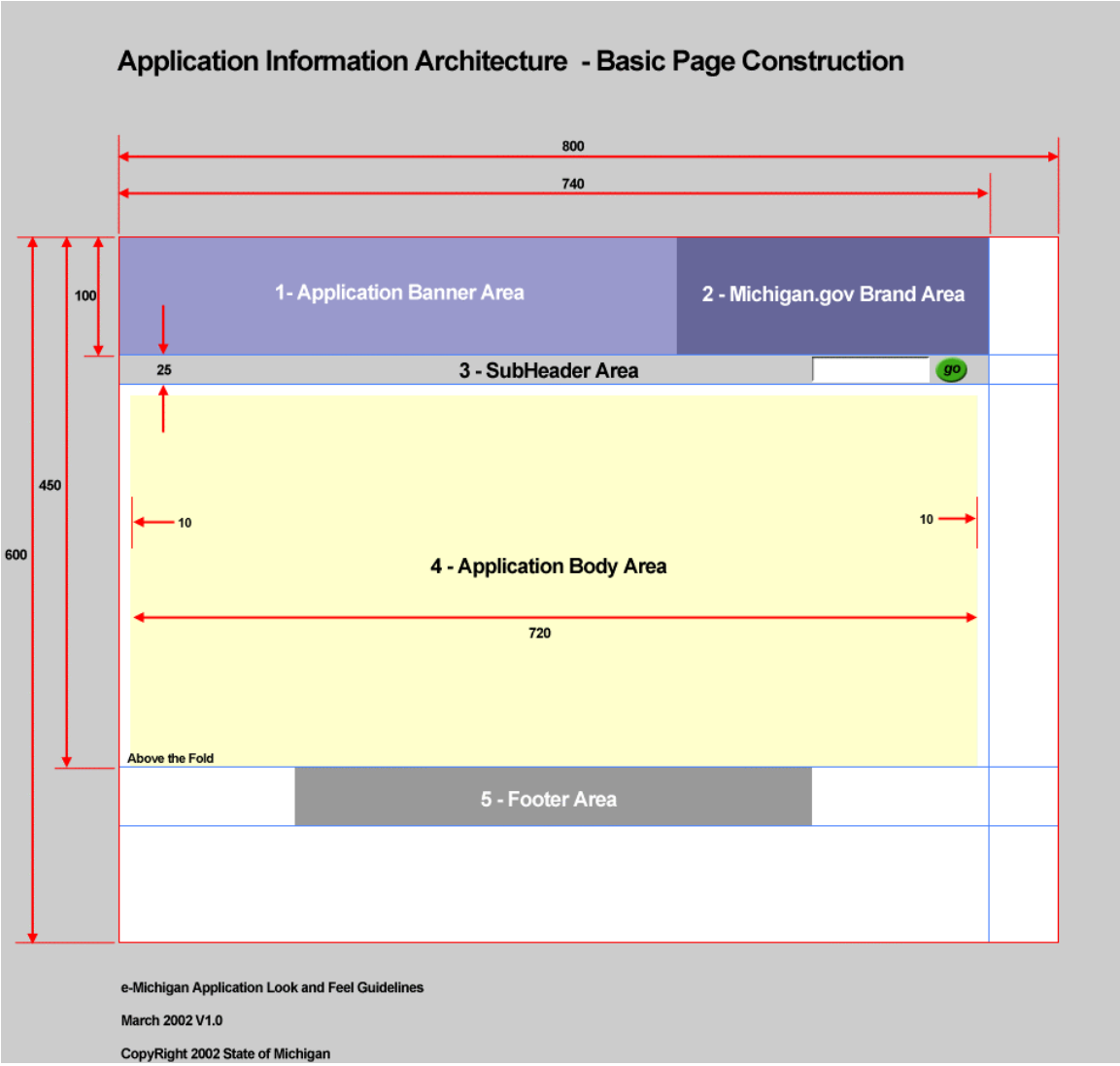

Figure 2 - Basic Page Construction with Left Navigation Only
Below is a detailed layout of the information architecture requirements for applications designed to include the use of supporting navigation from the left of the Application Body Area.

Left Hand navigation is used for primary navigation within the application that includes other identified purposes.

Standard ten (10) pixel gutters also apply to the Body Area.

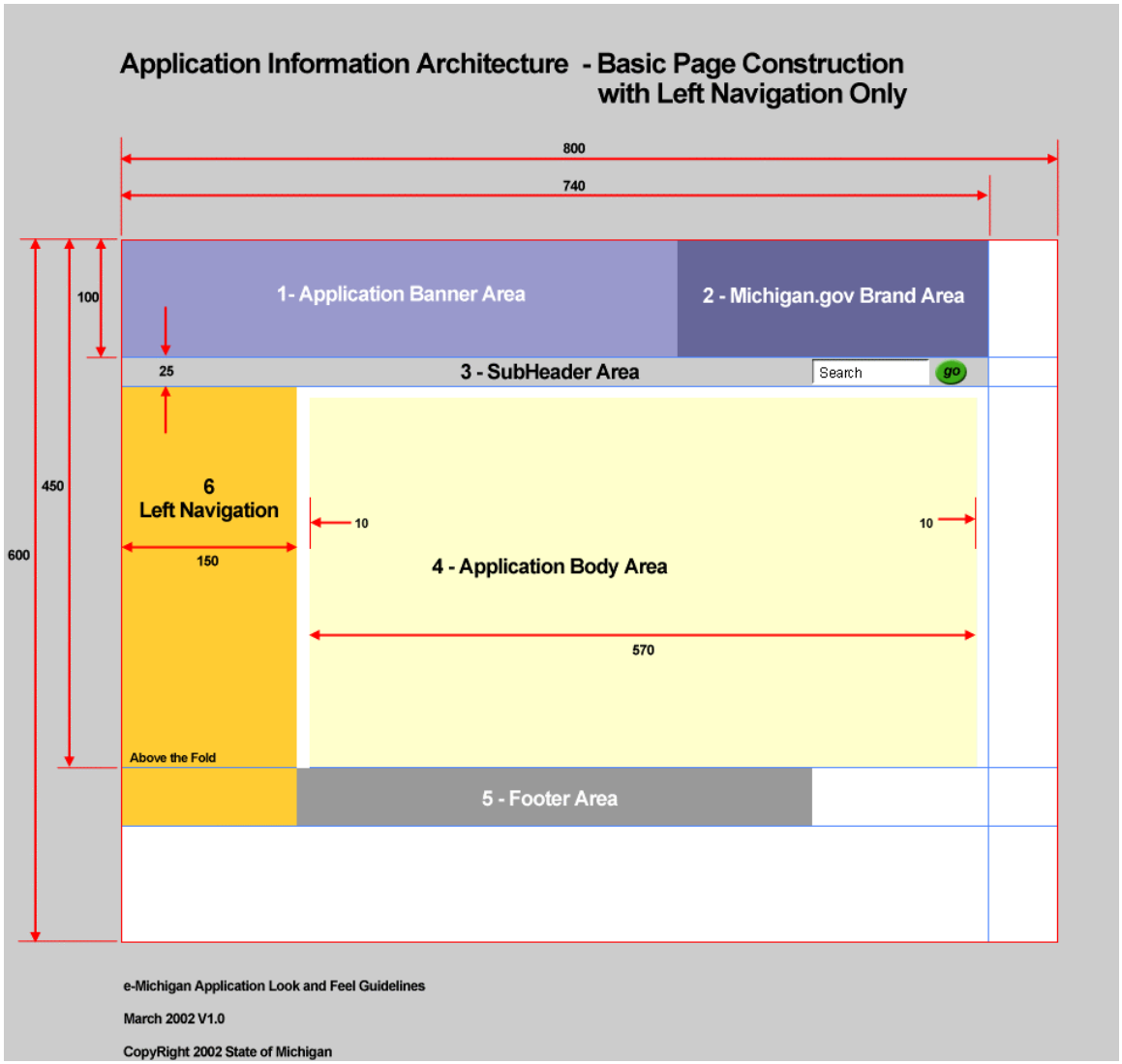

Figure 3 - Basic Page Construction with Left and Right Navigation
Below is a detailed layout of the information architecture requirements for applications designed to include the use of supporting navigation from the left and right of the Application Body Area.

Left Hand navigation is used for primary navigation, all other supported links and content can appear within the right hand navigation area.

Standard ten (10) pixel gutters also apply to the Body Area.

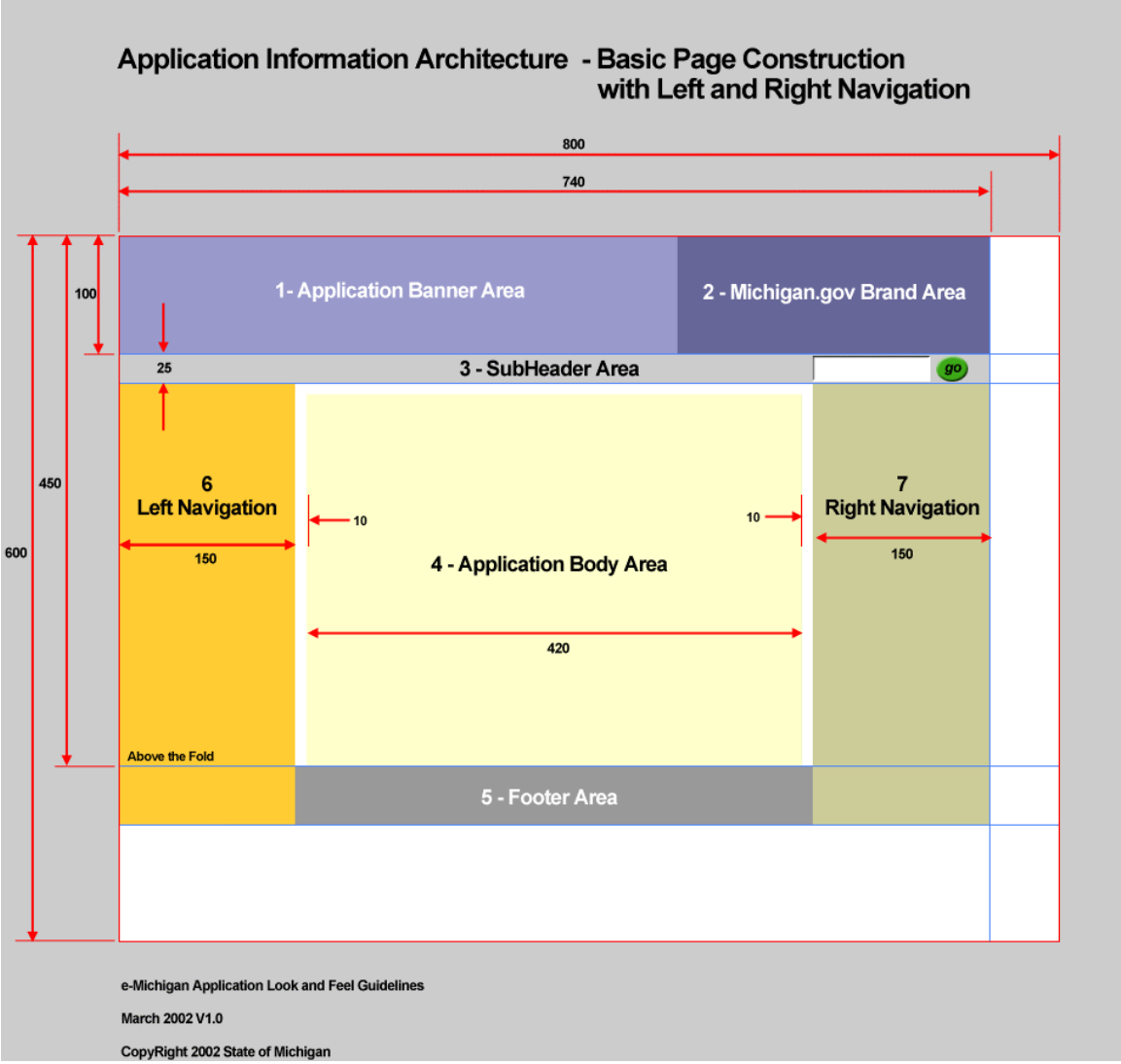

Figure 4 - Left Navigation Track - Button Styles and Alignment
Below is a detailed layout of the information architecture requirements for applications designed to include the use of supporting navigation from the left of the Application Body Area.

Left Hand navigation is used for primary navigation within the application that includes other identified purposes, such as other customer types, other tracks within the application etc.

The left navigation track consists of intention-based navigation referred to as "themes." These can essentially be named according to the needs of the application, but a customer-focused approach should be taken to naming conventions that will help users distinguish which area they should access. Wherever possible, avoid the use of long-program names that may be hard to understand to the user.

Three Click Rule
As a rule, the Michigan.gov technology platform supports the "three click rule". Users should be able to access the deepest aspects of any piece of content contained within a site by clicking no more than three times within the primary navigation areas of the site (left navigation). This makes navigation easy to understand and keeps content from becoming "buried" within areas of the site. It also forces more content up towards the surface of the site and improves overall access times by minimizing the time users must spend actually locating the information they want.

- Category 1
    - Sub Category 1
        - Sub-sub Category 1

Many studies have been conducted surrounding this rule and it has become an industry web design standard. For government sites especially, access to information that is well positioned and identified at the top level of a site means users experience with on-line services will meet their expectations.

Suggested Theme Functionality
Most (nearly all) State of Michigan agencies, bureaus and divisions have migrated their web sites to the e-Michigan Vignette Content Management Platform and utilize a system of alternating background cell colors and text colors: wherever possible, developers should imitate the look and feel of the parent agency web site, including the use of left hand navigation.

All themes are ordered top to bottom. For example, once the user clicks on a theme 1, that theme rotates to the top of the list and expands to show sub-theme options **(see example below).** Once the user selects theme 3, theme 1 returns to its original position in the left navigation track and theme 3 rotates to the top position.

When clicked, the theme heading will expand to show the sub-theme options. Each theme should have a unique set of attributes such as background cell and text color.

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Left Navigation Track Specifications and Hierarchy

- Each theme graphic button will have two versions - non-selected (OFF) and selected highlighted (ON) states

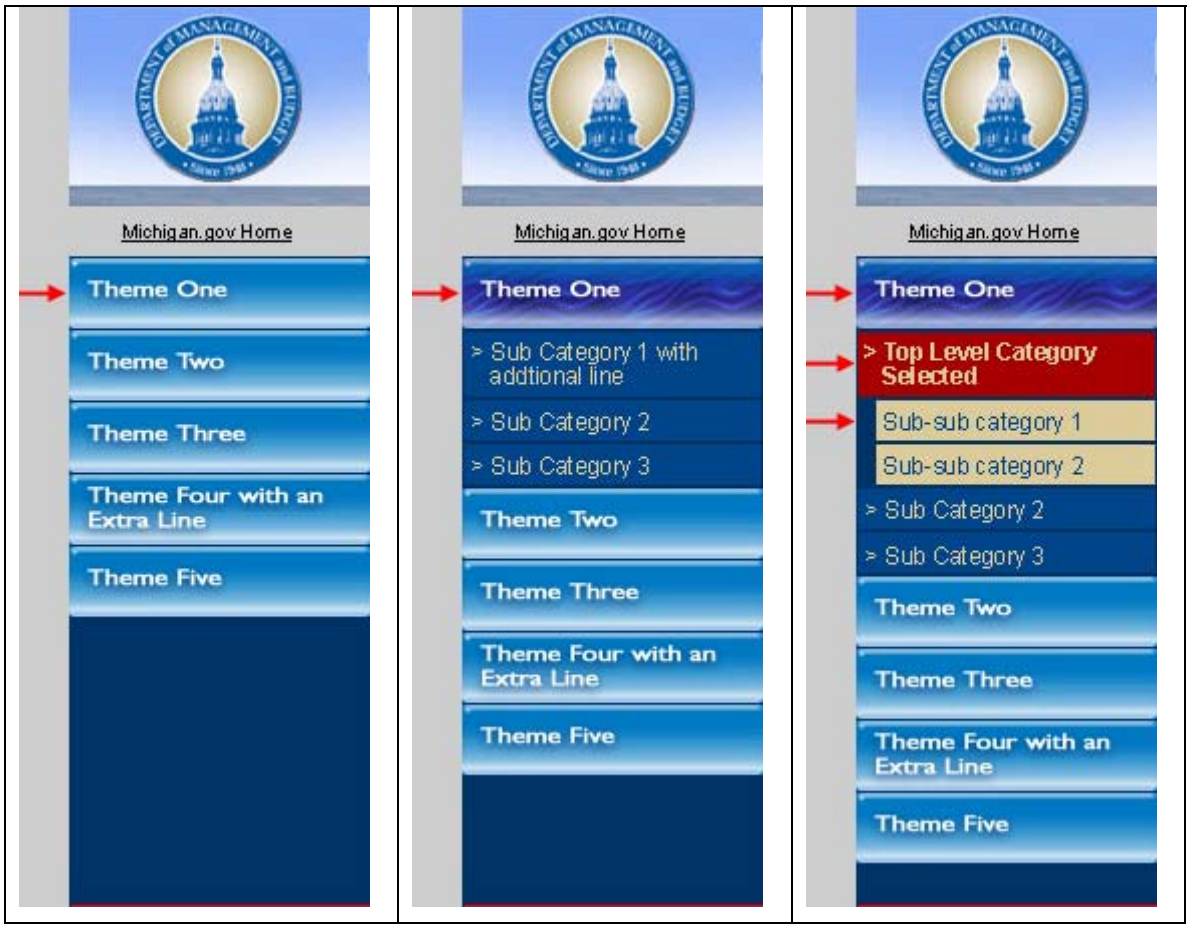
- Button font styles can be part of the overall look and feel of the application (if no other font is being specified use **Univers Condensed Bold**.

Univers Condensed Bold 12pt
Univers Condensed Bold 14pt
Univers Condensed Bold 18pt

- All theme server side text and navigation are HTML such as:
  - <font face='arial, helvetica, sans-serif' color='#HEX' size='-1'>
    - Category 1
      - Sub Category 1
        - Sub-sub Category 1
        - Sub-sub Category 2

- Sub-categories are highlighted when selected by an accent color, as well as the font face switching from regular text to bold text.
- Category 1 selected:
  - <font face='arial, helvetica, sans-serif' color='#HEX' size='-1' style='font-weight:bold'>

Figure 4



Navigation Look and Feel consistency

Note (image below) the consistent use of left navigation from site to site. The site on the left is a Vignette enabled site (http://www.michigan.gov/hal) while the e-commerce site on the right (http://www.mi-mall.michigan.gov/hal) uses a completely different web application and server, yet the look and feel is nearly one-to-one.

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Logo And Banner Standards: Examples And Usage

The following pages are designed to visualize and define the banner header area for the Michigan.gov brand, a key element to all on-line service sites representing the state of Michigan.

The goal of the banner header area is to present the user a unified, brand image that carries across to all agency home sites. In addition, the same brand image is duplicated at the agency application level, even when URL's change, so that the user experience is as seamless as possible.

Designed into the banner header area is the ability to accommodate the unique logo or symbol of the parent agency as well as the agency name. For applications that serve several agency user groups at the same time, a more "generic" logo has been developed to accommodate the service as a Michigan.gov product rather than a specific offering from a single agency or department.

The following pages also detail the approach taken for the use of applications built with the WebSphere Commerce Suite of tools and technology established by the e-Michigan Office. These include e-stores and other applications that utilize e-commerce systems to process payments and fees.

In all of these scenarios, the look and feel is treated as much as possible as a unified presentation of on-line services, offered by many different sources but with one goal in mind – fast and efficient on-line customer service.

Many of the headers detail how agency and application names and logos are accommodated within the standard grid. Examples are demonstrated here as a means of explaining the proper usage and accommodation of all the possible scenarios.

The example designs are not intended to be used however as a means of constructing the banner header. The Center of Excellence (CoE) within the e-Michigan Office is responsible for the design and construction of these banner headers.

Please contact the e-Michigan Office to obtain the correct banner art and any other follow on requirements that involve the Michigan.gov Brand Image.

e-Michigan Office
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Lansing, Michigan 48909
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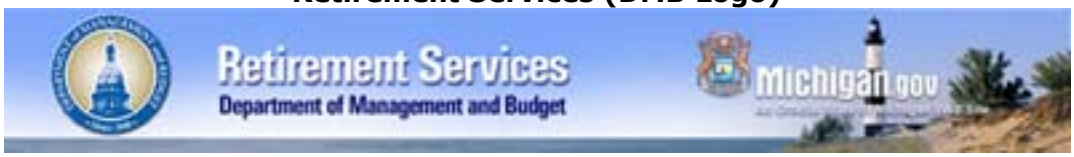
LOGO AND BANNER STANDARDS: NON-VIGNETTE APPLICATIONS

Site Category #1: Agencies/Offices/Bureaus/Divisions/Boards/Commissions

LOGO: **PARENT AGENCY LOGO**
(Office/Bureau/Division Name in banner)

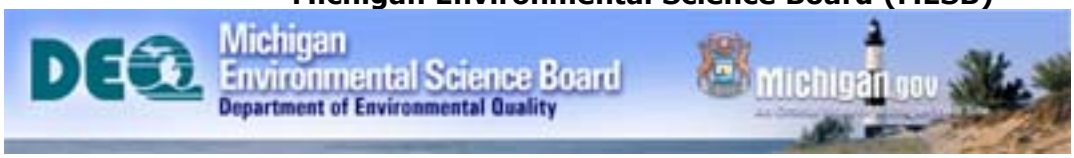
Examples:

- **Retirement Services (DMB Logo)**

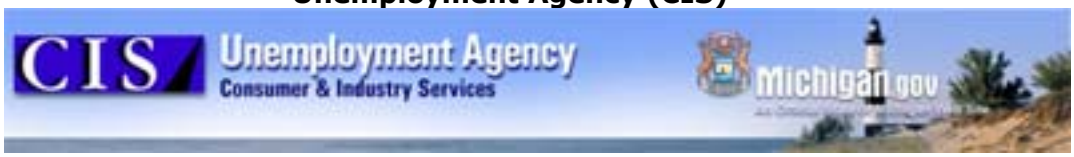


- **Michigan Community Service Commission**

- **Michigan Environmental Science Board (MESB)**



- **Unemployment Agency (CIS)**



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LOGO AND BANNER STANDARDS: NON-VIGNETTE APPLICATIONS

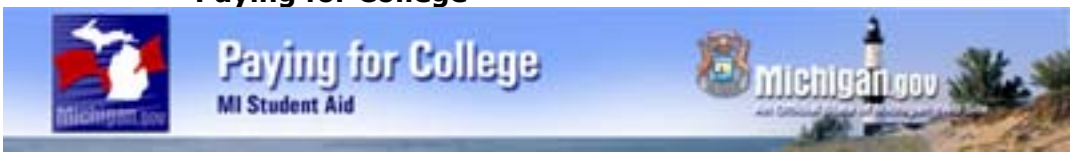
Site Category #2: Cross-Agency Sites
(Content is contributed by more than one agency)

LOGO: **Standard Cross-Agency Application Logo**
Blue box with image of the State of Michigan and red banner
- May include Sub-Text in dark blue under Application name

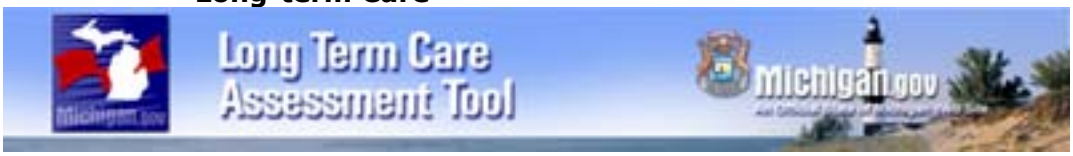
SITE NAME: **To Be Approved by e-Michigan**

Examples:

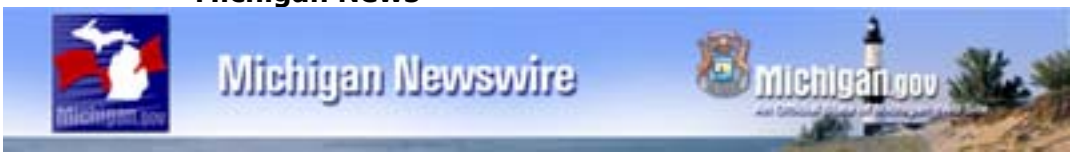
- **Paying for College**



- **Long-term Care**



- **Michigan News**



- **eLicense**

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LOGO AND BANNER STANDARDS: NON-VIGNETTE APPLICATIONS

Site Category #3: Agencies without a Current Logo

BANNER: Required Agency Primary Site Banner where a logo does not exist or an official "logo" or brand symbol was never developed by the agency. E-Michigan will utilize such primary site logos developed by an agency as the primary agency logo as they are developed, or create a temporary one if needed.

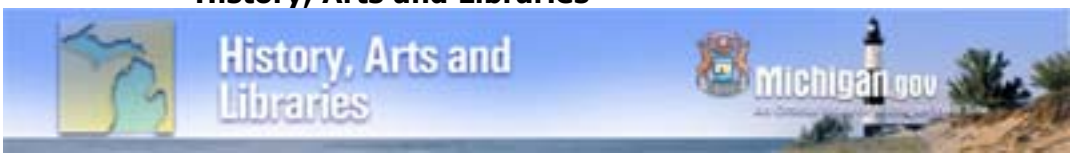
LOGO: **MI Map, State Coat of Arms, Other**

Examples:

- **Secretary of State**

- **State Employer**

- **History, Arts and Libraries**



- **Information Technology**

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LOGO AND BANNER STANDARDS: NON-VIGNETTE APPLICATIONS

Application Category #1: Non Migrated Applications on Existing State Servers

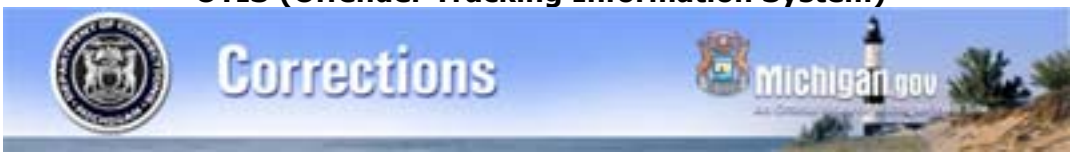
BANNER: Required Agency Primary Site Banner or Michigan.gov Banner (Either **full** (100 pix), **¾** (70pix) **½** Size (50 pix))

LOGO: Agency Logo

APPLICATION NAME: NO

Examples:

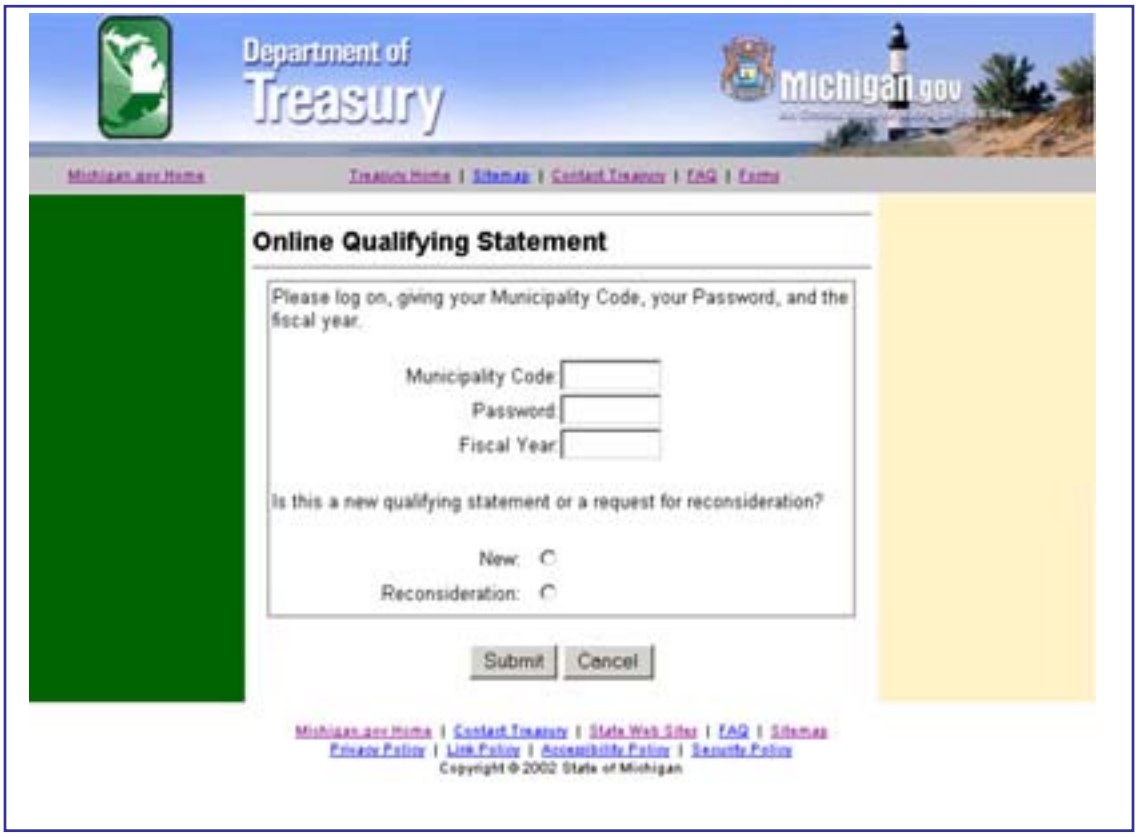
- **OTIS (Offender Tracking Information System)**



Application Sample

- **Municipal Finance - Log On**

Application Sample



LOGO AND BANNER STANDARDS: NON-VIGNETTE APPLICATIONS

Application Category #2: Websphere e Stores

BANNER: Exact replica of agency banner (100pix)

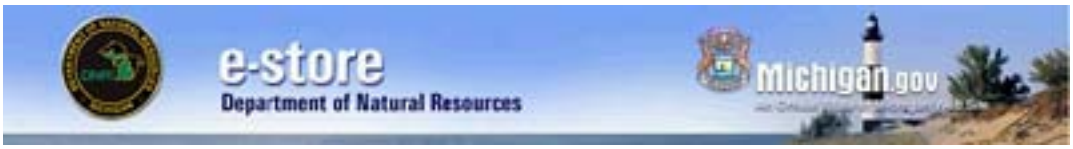
LOGO: Agency Logo

APPLICATION NAME: "e-store", with a subordinate title for parent agency

Examples:

- **HAL**

- **DNR**



Application Sample

LOGO AND BANNER STANDARDS: NON-VIGNETTE APPLICATIONS

Application Category #3: Third Party Applications Already in Production

BANNER: Modified version of Agency Site Banner to fit application NOTE: Agencies will be provided the standards and completed banner artwork to use the next time the application undergoes a redesign)

LOGO: Agency logo

APPLICATION NAME: Agency Primary Banner

Examples:

- **Campground Reservations – CURRENT**

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LOGO AND BANNER STANDARDS: NON-VIGNETTE APPLICATIONS

Application Category #3: Third Party Applications Already in Production

BANNER: Modified version of Agency Site Banner to fit application NOTE: Agencies will be provided the standards and completed banner artwork to use the next time the application undergoes a redesign)

LOGO: Agency logo

APPLICATION NAME: Agency Primary Banner

Examples:

- **Campground Reservations - REVISED**

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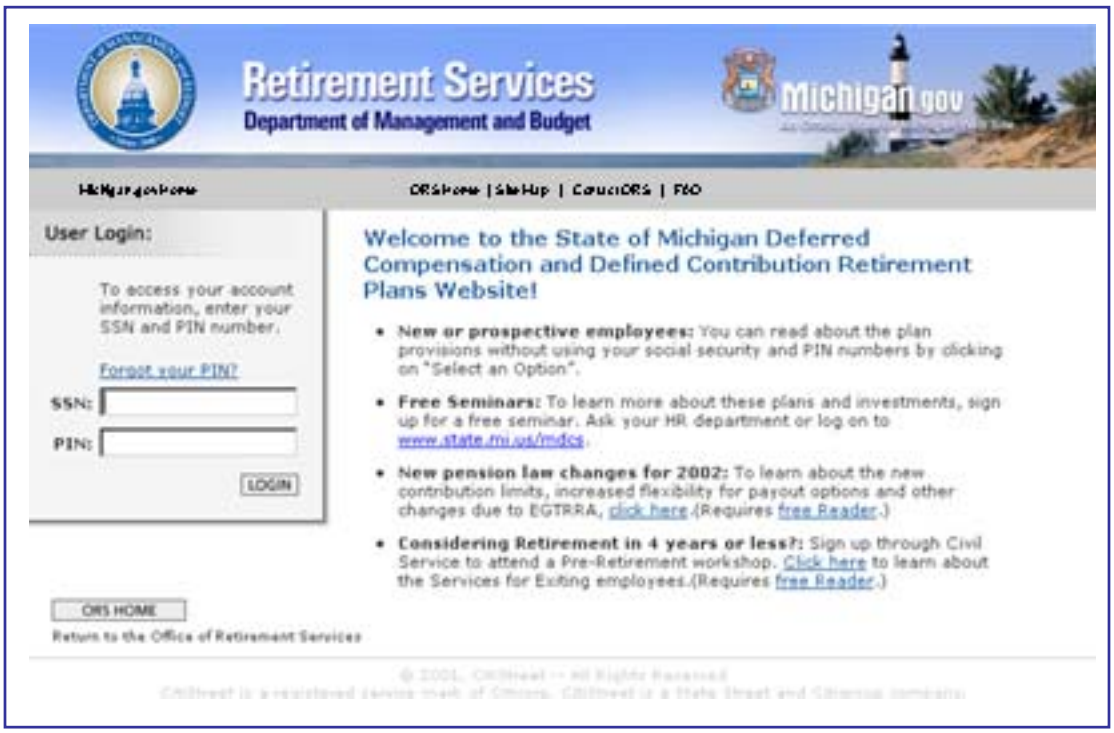
- **ORS Citistreet 401 (k) tool - CURRENT**

- **ORS Citistreet 401 (k) tool – REVISED**



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LOGO AND BANNER STANDARDS: NON-VIGNETTE APPLICATIONS

Application Category #4: New Agency Applications (non Vignette)

BANNER: Agency Primary Site Banner or Michigan.gov Banner (Either **full** (100 pix), **¾** (70pix) **½** Size (50 pix)) needs to be specified within the application style guide included with RFPs

LOGO: Agency Logo or Generic Logo (if cross-agency application)

APPLICATION NAME: Agency Primary Banner

Examples:

- **ICHAT (State Police Logo and agency name)**

100 pix

70 pix

50 pix

- **Business Services Startup (Cross Agency)**

100 pix

70 pix

50 pix

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Change Record Log to this Document:

Date	Change Made	Page No.	By
3/26/2002	Added language to require developers etc. to make requests for Michigan.gov branding elements to the attention of the webmaster at the e-Michigan office	1	R. Tombelli
3/26/2002	Added Change Record Log to document – notation on page 1	29	R. Tombelli
April 2, 2002	Modified paragraph text and sentences throughout document to correct grammatical errors and clarify statements.	3,5,6,8,11	R. Tombelli
April 2, 2002	Corrected image dimensions for Basic Page Construction with Left and Right Nav Body Area from 400 to 420 pixels	16	R. Tombelli
April 2, 2002	Added page headers and explanation to Banner header examples for Non-Vignette apps for clarification.	20	R. Tombelli
April 2, 2002	Modified and updated Table of Contents	2	R. Tombelli
April 2, 2002	Added introductory page to Banner Header Example Pages	20	R. Tombelli

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